ABSTRACT

Chica Eklund

The Art Subject in Thailand

A study about the role of the art subject in some schools in Thailand
Number of pages: 29

Historically the art subject has never had a main role in the school education. The main subjects in Sweden have been mathematics, Swedish and English, even if the other subjects also have been important. Unfortunately the subject of art has been considered less important. For a long time the art subject has been a subject that only teaches the students how to paint in different ways, but lately it has been noticed that the art subject has more qualities, for example concerning personal expressions. Now we can confirm that the art subject does have an important role in the school world, but how big a role?

With the help from interviews and literature studies, this essay wants to show if this ideology and knowledge already has been used in other countries, in this case Thailand. Through my interviews and examinations I could confirm that the responders consider the art subject important for the students’ creative thoughts and personal development. The question is: is this only an opinion or is it something that has already been used? My practise in the Thai schools has therefore been useful for me in this essay, since I could closely study the art subject, and see everything with my own eyes.

Key words: the art subject, Thailand, personal expression, personal development, Art history

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Street address</th>
<th>Phone number</th>
<th>E-mail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Växjö University</td>
<td>Universitetsplatsen</td>
<td>0470-708000</td>
<td><a href="mailto:lub@lub.vxu.se">lub@lub.vxu.se</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Art Subject in Thailand

A study about the role of the art subject in some schools in Thailand
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. **Introduction**  
   1.1 Background  
   1.2 The purpose of my study  
   1.3 Aim and scope  
   1.4 Limitation  

2. **Methodology**  
   2.1 Scientific perspectives  
   2.2 Positive approach  
   2.3 Hermeneutic approach  
   2.4 My method for this essay  
   2.5 Difficulties and problems with the methods  

3. **Theory**  
   3.1 The history of the art subject in Europe  
   3.2 Art history in Thailand  
   3.3 The art subject in Thai schools, today and historically  
   3.4 Common goals for different international schools  
   3.5 The influence of Buddhism in Thailand and Thai education  

4. **Empirical presentation**  
   4.1 Summary of received replies from the question forms  
   4.2 The art teachers’ questionnaire replies  
   4.3 The other teachers’ questionnaire replies  

5. **Result and conclusions**  
   5.1 Comparisons between my studies and observations  

6. **Analysis and discussion**  
   6.1 Suggestions for future research  

7. **References**  
   Internet  
   Literature  
   7.1 Appendix  

---

2
1. Introduction

In the introduction, I will present the background of my exam essay. I will also discuss my Research Question, my purpose and the disposition.

1.1 Background

My name is Chica Eklund, and I am the writer of this exam essay. I am a teacher student in the Art and History Education at Växjö University since autumn 2002.

Choosing the theme of this essay made me think a lot and several ideas flew through my head. I applied for a MFS-scholarship dealing with art in schools in Thailand and from the time I got the possibility to carry out a study in Thailand it was clear and obvious for me to concentrate my study on the importance of the art subject in some Thai school, because I think art plays a big role when it comes to expressing yourself, and a big meaning for the personal development for the students. Understanding and knowledge about art is also important when it comes to participation in the society which is full of art in many different ways. It is important in our daily life that we know how to handle all the impressions we get from the media like TV, radio, internet etc.

In my opinion art isn’t valued as much as for instance mathematics and science. I think art is important for all individuals’ development and more time should be allocated to art studies to create the necessary skills for a wider understanding. In line with myself, Karlsson & Lövgren (2001) state that both youths and children want and need more time in school for creative activities and art, painting, theatre, music etc. to able to express their feelings in pictures, words and songs¹.

Two years ago I was in the Netherlands doing a student exchange within the school of education at Växjö University. There I noticed to my surprise that art didactics and the art subject seemed to have a higher importance than in Swedish schools. The teachers in the Netherlands had already understood the value and the empowerment the art subject gives to students. In the Netherlands students spend more time at lessons in art than in Sweden. I have a great interest for didactics and art and this study helps me to enlarge my knowledge and my perception on a more global level to become an art teacher. As I also have some of my roots in Thailand it will expand my personal interest for Thai art and culture. For these

¹ Karlsson, Lövgren 1991:14
reasons I have written my exam essay about the art subject in some schools in Thailand. I am sure this investigation will be important for my future role as a teacher, because it has been a journey in reflection, learning and critical thinking as well as increased my social competence.

My first ideas about Thai school were totally incorrect. I believed that the Thai classroom was very strict and that the children were a lot more polite than in western schools. I also thought that the teachers in Thailand demanded more academic knowledge from the students. In Thailand it is legal to punish children, at home and in public, and in the schools. I knew that from my own experience as a young student in Thai schools. That is probably why I thought that the Thai school would almost be like a prison. But after my visit in the two Thai schools I noticed that I had a lot personal prejudices that were not justified. I have now formed a different opinion then the one I had before my study trip. I know now that everything is not always what it seems to be.

1.2 The purpose of my study

My purpose with this study is to get a deeper knowledge about the importance of didactics and the art subject in the Thai schools. I have also studied the importance of didactics and the art subject as regards student’s personality according to the teachers.

1.3 Aim and scope

In this study I have examined the following questions that circle the whole study:

- What role does art has in Thai schools?
- What are the opinions of the art teachers regarding the art subject? What opinion do other subject teachers have about the art subject?
- Do the art teachers realise that they are part of the students’ personal development?
1.4 Limitation

Because this subject is big, I have decided to concentrate on what role art didactics and the art subject has in two Thai elementary schools. I will not carry out any comparison between art in Thai and Swedish schools, but of course in the end I will include some personal thoughts and ideas concerning similarities and differences between the two countries.
2. Methodology

In this chapter I will present my choice of methodology and motivate it, as well as present the scientific view, fieldwork approach, value of my study and my analysis of data.

2.1 Scientific perspectives

There are two different approaches that scientists can choose in their search for truth and knowledge. These two main directions are called positivism and hermeneutic and you can use them both.²

2.2 Positive approach

Positivism has its origin in natural science and aim at the absolute truth and knowledge. They prefer to use statistics, just to get as accurate a numeral as possible. But it is important that you ignore what you previously believed, and in the end the results will only be pure facts and science.³

According to positivism there are only two sources of knowledge and information:

- Empiric - what we can see with our senses (induction)
- Logic – what we can get from logical conclusions (deduction). The logical is better than our senses, because our senses can deceive us.⁴

2.3 Hermeneutic approach

Hermeneutic has its origin in interpretation of art and literature. The source of the knowledge is to look inside you in order to understand other people’s behaviour and empathy. But you can easily draw the wrong conclusions, if you interpret other people’s situations on the basis of your own experiences. For that reason the context is important to

² http://www.edu.kristianstad.se/soderport/so/vetenskap/beg.html
³ http://www.edu.kristianstad.se/soderport/so/vetenskap/beg.html
⁴ http://www.edu.kristianstad.se/soderport/so/vetenskap/beg.html
take note of. According to hermeneutic, it is more important to understand knowledge than the explanations.  

Comparison between positivism and hermeneutic:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positivism</th>
<th>Hermeneutic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Nature science</td>
<td>• Humanities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Absolute truth</td>
<td>• Relative truth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• quantitative</td>
<td>• qualitative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• explain</td>
<td>• understanding</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In my paper I have used a hermeneutic approach, because I have made my own conclusions and my own interpretations. At the same time I have not excluded a positivistic approach. The empirical material has therefore been based on interviews, literature, articles and personal opinions.

I have also used a qualitative method in my essay, which is almost the same as the hermeneutic. But one difference between these methods is that the qualitative method does not use the ability to “feel” that they use in the hermeneutic approach. In the qualitative method you try to get a deeper understanding for an occasion. Qualitative research often gets criticised because the results are mostly based on analyses contra other research methods such as the quantity method.  

My question has connections with the school system and I have used different methods to gather as exact facts as possible. In one method the art teachers and some other teachers were given questionnaire forms just to get their personal opinions about the art subject’s importance in schools. The art teachers got more profound questionnaire forms, which were more specific for just them. The other teachers got a similar questionnaire form but not as thorough and not with so many questions. The principal of the school has given out the questionnaire forms and also received them. All replies were anonymous just to avoid any psychological pressure, enabling me to get as an objective image of Thai school as possible.

---

5 http://www.edu.kristianstad.se/soderport/so/vetenskap/beg.html
6 http://sv.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kvalitativ_metod
7 these supplement is attached at then end of this essay.
2.4 My method for this essay

At first I observed the two schools in Thailand on location, where I followed three art teachers in their work in the schools. I have interviewed them and also some other subject teachers about what their opinion is about Subject of art in their school. The questionnaire forms are available in appendix. I finally I have used literature about art theory and didactics.

2.5 Difficulties and problems with the methods

One problem that came up with the questionnaire forms is the language, because I first wrote the questions in Swedish and then translated them into English, but most of the teachers didn’t understand English that well, so they couldn’t understand or answer the questions correctly. I therefore had to ask a teacher that could speak English to translate the questions from English into Thai and then write the questions in Thai, and then I finally could let the teachers answer the questions.

This is why unfortunately there is a risk that the questionnaire forms aren’t exactly in the order I wanted them to be from the beginning, but I had to rely on my translator in Thailand. When I got the questions back, I had to translate the answers back into Swedish and then again into English. For this reasons there is a large risk that the questions and answers aren’t 100% correct, but at least part of them are.

I have closely followed three art teachers in their schoolwork. All the teachers and the students were already informed about my presence and focus. I have closely watched every art teacher one week at a time, just to learn and study their way of teaching art in school.

I have tried to get the curriculum for the art subject in Thai schools, but without any successful results. But I have at least found some homepages from international schools in Thailand. I have then compared their curriculum with each other, and I’ve noticed that they where quite similar.

There where a lot of homepages from municipal schools in Thailand, but they where only written in Thai and I have tried to contact the principal but without any successful results. I have therefore based my thoughts on the curriculum of the international schools and compared them with the answers the art teachers gave me. For that reason I rely on the art teachers’ answers and what I have seen during my observations there.
3. Theory

_in the following chapter I will present my theories regarding what kind of role the art subject has had through times, both in Sweden, Europe and Thailand._

3.1 The history of the art subject in Europe

During the beginning of the 20th century drawing was established as a school subject around Europe. Drawing as a subject differed in many different ways from today’s art subject. At this time art subject had another name: drawing lessons. The students learned to draw straight lines that in the end resulted in different kinds of figures, shapes and characters. Johan Heinrich Pestalozzi (1746-1827) invented this type of education. Because of this tradition schools often, to be able to pay less salary, hired uneducated art teachers.⁸

Pestalozzi developed a method that was beneficial to a large classroom with many students. Pestalozzi’s method was for the student to copy exactly what the teacher had drawn at the whiteboard, all at the same time. This method didn’t leave any room for individual thoughts and own opinions in the student’s creations. Pestalozzi had an idea that this kind of drawing was good for the ability to see different kinds of shapes and then reduce them to geometrical forms. Pestalozzi wanted the students to teach the students to observe and to reproduce in a specific way.⁹

The direction of the subject changed in the 20th century because of the development of the establishment and the growing of psychology and its influence on individual and human science. Within psychology studies, dealing with pictures that children have drawn started. Researchers were interested to see development standard among people. For this reason you could say that psychology played an important role in discovering the importance of expressing yourself with pictures.¹⁰

During the 20th century there were a lot of examinations about children’s art expressions. In 1919 the art curriculum in Sweden stated that drawing is mainly a form of expression for the students and ideas started to arise that drawing could be integrated with a couple of different subjects. Thoughts arose that students should use drawing as a means

---

⁸ Lind, hasselberg, Kühlhorn 1992:10
⁹ Lind, hasselberg, Kühlhorn 1992:14
¹⁰ Lind, hasselberg, Kühlhorn 1992:14
to express themselves, to develop their imagination, and at the same time practice to express themselves. Now the concept of free creation began to be discussed in the schools.\textsuperscript{11}

According to the book: “\textit{Tidsbilder, perspektiv på skolan och bildskapandet under 150 år}”, written by Lind, Hasselberg and Kühlhorn, free creation has many meanings.

- A picture that is made by a child is never wrong because it is an individual art expression from their own imagination. So the teacher should never correct their paintings.
- It is important that the child is taught how to use colour as a form of expression and let them use colour and different shapes to show their feelings.
- To paint with colour is good for the child’s spontaneity, but to paint with pencil restrains their creation.
- To express yourself demands large spaces, for example: large paper shows that the children don’t have any limits for their imagination.
- Teaching perspectives and copying isn’t appropriate, since this could lead the children to distrust themselves.
- Children’s expressions don’t have to portray anything. It doesn’t matter if the picture is abstract; the main idea is that it is personal.
- Different people express themselves in different ways and then need different types of material. More materials mean more expressions.\textsuperscript{12}

Between 1950 and 1960, the free creation had its real breakthrough. These ideas totally changed the concept of art and altered the way of teaching art. Teaching was no longer focused on how to judge the students’ painting and the requirements for different art classroom and better painting material became obvious. The criterion for grading also changed, and the opinion of what was good or bad art became a matter of personal taste. There are various reasons why the free creation became so important. One reason was a wish to raise free and independent individuals. It is probably not a coincidence that this thought came from the Second World War.\textsuperscript{13}

\textsuperscript{11} Lind, Hasselberg, Kühlhorn 1992:17  
\textsuperscript{12} Lind, Hasselberg, Kühlhorn 1992:18 (The text is my own translation from the book)  
\textsuperscript{13} Karlsson, Lövgren 2001:20
Another opinion is that the invention of free creation of art had a big impact. The 20th century was a long period of experimenting. Schools and education was also influenced and of course pedagogues wanted to introduce all those new ideas in their education to raise the children in what they believed to be the right way.14

In the curriculum for the compulsory school in Sweden, Lgr80, there was a clear indication of the changed direction when the painting education changed name to the art subject. The new the art subject was described as an important means of communication; just as important as speech, reading and writing.15

3.2 Art history in Thailand

From ancient times to the modern Thailand, the people have always had an understanding and knowledge of their culture. They have had the ability to create and produce work of art that you find today. The art creation is not only reflected in culture, but also in Thai society.16

Historically, art and literature in Thailand has taken a lot from the religion. The classical styles of architecture you can see in the Buddhist temples are structurally alike to the Chinese. Many other decorative art styles are typical of the oriental. The gracefully tapering roof structure is typical of Thailand and Burma.17

The Khmers, the Indians, the Chinese, and the Westerners have had a big influence on Thai art. A lot of other cultures have been the basis for the Thai art and its development into a personal art form. The Thai people have their own opinion about this, and claim that they have modified their own art form.18

14 Karlsson, Lövgren 2001:20
15 Lind, hasselberg, Kühlhorn 1992:18
17 http://asianspiritgallery.com/thailand.html
According to Ampai Tiranasar, who wrote the essay *Cultural identity and the art subject in Thailand*, the Thai traditional paintings have many roles and functions.\(^\text{19}\) He has structured the different roles into numbers. That’s why I did the same. I have also shorted down his text a bit.

1) **As decoration**, both big and small decorations, it may be as an art piece or as a part of constructions, always beautiful and aesthetic. The decoration sometimes also shows the means to understand Buddha’s teaching.

2) **As reflection of social life and the social life often related to Buddhism.** In the paintings you can study the people social lives, the artists often painted the actual environment in their times from kings to commons.

3) **As an artwork.** The traditional form and content may look similar, but if you look into details, you can see uniqueness to the work that is created by different artists. Even though they lived at the same period of time they painted differently, because they could have various statuses, from the royal figures to the common people.

4) **As academic resources.** In the traditional paintings you can see history, social life, culture, economics, and many other aspects.

### 3.3 The art subject in Thai schools, today and historically

Thailand has adopted its present school system from the west. Earlier they had a different kind of education. That system was formed by three institutions: home, temple and palace. At home the parents taught their children about family occupation, tradition and how to act socially. In the temple the teachers were the monks, and they taught how to read and their religion: Buddhism. The last institution was the palace, where the children learned all kinds of classical art.\(^\text{20}\)

When Thailand finally adopted the western school system the primary and secondary school mostly learned “how-to-do” in the schools. In the classrooms it was common to find that students were silent and passive. This behaviour in art classroom is not only prevalent

\(^{19}\) http://pioneer.netserv.chula.ac.th/~tampai1/hk2004.htm

in Thailand, but can be found everywhere in Asian societies. The students expect their teachers to give them exact instructions on what tasks they should draw and when to draw it, and what tasks they should complete and how to do it.\textsuperscript{21}

The modern system of teaching has now changed a bit, and it is important that the young generation learns how to “want” to create something new corresponding to their earlier production of copies. It is important for art teachers to help children to appreciate their own and their own different styles and to shape their own creations.\textsuperscript{22}

Studies have shown that a child learns that art is related to the culture of the past and present. By helping children to study the role of art in society, they become aware of how many ways of visual forms there are and they can shape and express the feelings of people from all cultures. Only then can children begin to appreciate art as a way of life. That would help the children to understand that the visual forms they create help them express their own identities. The Thai people’s way of life reflects the Thai culture a lot and that is desirable in the art subject, as you can read in the art curriculum.\textsuperscript{23}

\textsuperscript{21}\url{http://pioneer.netserv.chula.ac.th/~tampai1/hk2004.htm}
\textsuperscript{22}\url{http://pioneer.netserv.chula.ac.th/~tampai1/hk2004.htm}
\textsuperscript{23}\url{http://pioneer.netserv.chula.ac.th/~tampai1/hk2004.htm}
Bangkok Pantana School says about art in their school:

We believe the contribution that art & design makes to every child’s education is invaluable and the opportunities and experiences offered by art & design aim to foster thinking, communication, physical and social skills alongside spiritual, moral and cultural development for all of our students.

Within the art curriculum we aim to establish a creative, supportive and encouraging atmosphere in which staff and students can work in a relaxed, imaginative and energetic way. The subject of art is concerned with organic and developed approaches with practising teachers as powerful role models.

We aim to stimulate visual awareness in students by challenging, extending and intensifying their aesthetic experience using nature, various cultures and artists, and investigating the man-made environment. Lessons in art and design can then be a channel for every student to express their own individual sensibility, intuition, sensitivities, feelings and emotions.

The art curriculum will encourage independent study through individual research based on investigation using the student's own initiative, critical awareness and analysis. We recognise that creativity is the basis of innovative thinking and as such see the creative process as equal in worth to the final product.²⁴

²⁴ http://www.patana.ac.th/Curriculum/art.asp
3.4 Common goals for different international schools

Below there are some extracts of common goals for different international schools found in their curricula:

- Develop children’s creativity and enquiry
- Develop practical skills and techniques and an appropriate use of materials
- Guide children towards an appreciation of their own art and that of other artists, eras and cultures
- Develop visual awareness
- Creative, imaginative and innovative thought
- The ability to formulate and communicate ideas and feelings visually
- The ability to analyse, solve problems and evaluate the results
- Self image, self reliance and responsiveness
- Aesthetic awareness
- Drawing techniques and processes: observational drawing (figure, portrait, still-life, landscape, perspective, etc.)
- Painting techniques and processes: watercolour, acrylic, pastel, etc.
- Sculpture techniques and processes: clay, papier-mâché, collage, fibres, found objects, etc.
- Elements and principles of art: colour, shape/form, line, texture, etc.
- Awareness and respect for other people and the environment
- Physical and perceptual skills
- Integrate art techniques and processes in specific themes or styles
- Examine, analyse, criticise and compare works of art
- Create art projects ranging from realistic to abstract
- Use symbols, symbolism, mood and stylisation25

---

The art subject in Thailand states that their culture is very important in means of creating their Thai identity. The king of Thailand (Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej) is loved by the people. The people think of him as a God, next to Lord Buddha. The king is well-known for wanting to protect the Thai culture at any cost, foremost the art and the music.²⁶

3.5 The influence of Buddhism in Thailand and Thai education

The Thai art goes hand in hand with Buddhism, which is the biggest religion in Thailand. More than 90% of the people are Buddhist, and they adhere to and live as Lord Buddha, king and divine, proclaims.²⁷

Thai art is close to the Buddhist philosophy and spirit, and is important from birth to death to the Thai people. Because of that, Thai art today remains a very important part of Thai life and the Thai school education.²⁸

²⁶ http://sunsite.au.ac.th/thailand/Thai_arts/music.html
²⁸ http://asianspiritgallery.com/thailand.html
4. Empirical presentation

In this chapter I will present my empirical findings and the gathered information from interviews and observations within the company.

4.1 Summery of received replies from the question forms

All results are presented from two different schools, named A and B. The first replies are from art teachers, named AT1, AT2 and AT3 continued by the answers from non-art teachers named A-D in school A and E-H in school B.

4.2 The art teacher’s questionnaire replies

- Do you think that the art subject is equivalent to other subjects in school?

  AT 1A: I think it is equal, but the art subject is especially important for the student to create their own imagination.

  AT 2A: Yes, I think so. But the art subject needs more time a week, because it is a practical education that needs more preparations.

  AT 3B: That is important, but the art subject also promotes creative thoughts.

- Do you think that the students think that the art subject is important? Or do the students think that the art lesson is just something fun but not important?

  AT 1A: What all students consider is hard to know, you have to look at every individual. But most of the students seem to like the art subject.

  AT 2A: I believe my students seem to enjoy art lessons because they get to work independently and they are allowed to have their own thoughts. I know from experience that the student appreciate that. My students have noticed that art language is a knowledge that has been used constantly in our community, more now than ever.
AT 3B: The students believe most of all that the art subject is fun. But they often don’t know and notice how much knowledge they receive in the process.

- What does the school plan look like? Does the art subject have as much space as the other subjects?

AT 1: Not quite as much that is necessary.

AT 2: No, the art subject needs more space and hours a week.

AT 3: Less, but we usually do a combination with the different subjects.

- What does the government say about the art subject in school?

AT 1: The government decides the foundation but the teachers can stretch the rules.

AT 2: The government wants the art subject to be a sanctuary for the students, a place for the students to relax and have free thoughts and their own opinions about their creations.

AT 3: The government wants us teachers to encourage the students to have free minds and thoughts.

- Do you think that the art subject is just about how to teach students how to paint in different ways? Or do you think the art subject is a way to express feelings?

AT 1: To paint is a way to express feelings and thoughts. The result of what it looks like is not so important.

AT 2: All depends on every student’s interest and ideas but my role as a teacher is to present both choices for art development and to stimulate every student’s personality and imagination.

AT 3: I want a combination. Some pupils are more creative than others in art and also need a lot more guidelines for developing their talent. Some don’t have this talent but are very committed. You must see every student as an individual person.

- Do you combine different subject with the art subject?
AT 1: We do that in our school.

AT 2: Yes.

AT 3: All subjects are mixed.

- *Is the art language the same as the language as speech and writing?*
  
  AT 1: Yes. With pictures you don’t need an explanation.

  AT 2: Yes.

  AT 3: Yes, you must start from every individual’s background. Sometimes that is something you must revile.

- *Is the art subject important for the student in the future?*
  
  AT 1: Very important for personal development.

  AT 2: Yes, because you frequently use it daily in many ways. How we dress, how we decorate our homes etc.

  AT 3: Absolutely. Many will use in daily life the information they have been taught from school, in one way or another.

- *Do you think that you can give “fair” grades? What exactly is it you look for when you give the grades?*
  
  AT 1: First I see the responsibility every student has, disciplinary behaviour and I also follow every student’s personal development.

  AT 2: I make every lesson more individual, just to teach every one to paint and receive a high grade.

  AT 3: I look mostly at engagement and taking active part more then the result itself.

- *Please rank the subjects according to importance. Write the most important first and the least important subject last. History, Sport, Mathematics, Art, Language and Music*
AT 1: Art, Music, Sport, History, Mathematics and Language

AT 2: Language, Art, Mathematics, History, Sport and Music

AT 3: Art, Music, Language, Sport, History and Mathematics

4.3 The other teacher’s questionnaire replies

• What do you think the students learn to do in the art subject?

AA: Design, range of colours, how to paint shadows and print stamps, create. How to create clay pots, papier-mâché and how to draw depictions.

BA: Thai design, geometry, construction design, paint portraits, paint profiles, paint perspectives and positions.

CA: Everything that you can paint and draw.

DA: I think that the students learn to draw perspectives, the different types of colour, portraits, sculptures, patterns and advertising pictures.

EB: Portraits, colours, papier-mâché and perspective.

FB: Portraits, the knowledge of different colours, sculpture.

GB: The art subject teaches the students to express themselves through the pictures they draw. Their imagination grows and they then become more harmonious and calm.

HB: The art subject teaches a lot of things that are very important for the students to develop. The main thing is to express their feelings in the paintings.

• Do you think that the art subject is equally important as other education? If you answer yes, then why?

AA: I think every subject is important. The art subject is to develop your figurative sense. It is good to be aesthetically competent, because we need it in our everyday use.
**BA:** All educations are equalled important. It teaches the students to dare express their feelings and be independent.

**CA:** Equal, because the art teachers teach the students to have their own thoughts, will and feelings.

**DA:** Yes the subjects are equal. The art subject teaches the students to plan their work of art. In the same time the students learn to take responsibility.

**EB:** Yes

**FB:** Yes, because the art subject is a subject that you can combine with every other subject and make that subject even better.

**GB:** Of course it’s equal. The art subject teaches knowledge that the students can use in everyday life.

- *Do you think that the art subject is just how to teach the students how to paint in different ways? Or do you think the art subject also is a way to expressing feelings?*

  **AA:** The art subject gives knowledge in both visual art and personal development. The art subject is a good way for the students to know how to express themselves. The teacher teaches the base, but the students have to take responsibility before they can development themselves.

  **BA:** The art subject teaches the students to development their own personality, because it makes the students think by themselves. In that way they become responsible and that makes the art subject more fun for the student.

  **CA:** The art subject is very important. It teaches the students to express their feelings in a way they need to. Other subjects do that quite as well as the art subject.

  **DA:** The art subject teaches the students to paint, draw and most importantly to dare express their feelings to another person. Different people need to express their feelings in different ways and in the art subject there are many ways to do that.
EB: The art subject is very much a subject that teaches how to express the students feelings. The students can not do that to the same extent in other subjects.

FB: I think that the art subject teaches how to paint but is also a way to express the student’s feelings. Everybody needs to express their feelings in some way and the art subject is a very good alternative.

GB: Yes, the art subject teaches the students to express their feelings.

HB: Yes, to express their feelings, and to development their imagination.

- Do you think that the students can use the art subject in everyday life?
AA: Everything the students learn in the art subject I think they can use in everyday life, especially if you work as an artist, a designer or an architect.

BA: Yes, of course. For example: design their homes.

CA: Yes

DA: Yes, the art subject teaches the students to plan their art work and that is one thing the students will use outside the schools walls; how to plan their weekday better.

EB: Yes, a lot. The students got the knowledge about how to dress, design, do make up, in other words: they become more aesthetic.

FB: Yes

GB: Yes

HB: Yes

- Please rank the subjects according to importance. Write the most important first and the least important subject last. History, Sport, Mathematics, Art, Language and Music
AA: Mathematics, History, Art, Language, Music and Sport

BA: Sport, Art, Music, Language, Mathematics and History
CA: Mathematics, History, Art, Music, Sport and Language

DA: Art, Music, History, Language, Sport and Mathematics

EB: Language, Sport, Art, Music, History and Mathematics

FB: Mathematics, Language, Art, Sport, Music and History

GB: Language, Mathematics, History, Art, Music and Sport

HB: Language, Mathematics, History, Art, Music and Sport
5. Result and conclusions

In this chapter I will describe the results of my essay. I will try to answer the questions stated in Aim and scope.

The questions:

• What role does art have in Thai schools?
• What are the opinions of the art teachers regarding the art subject? What opinion do other subject teachers have about the art subject?
• Do the art teachers realise that they are part of the students’ personal development?

In the results of the Aim and scope I could see that the art subject has some kind of role in the schools, but unfortunately not the most important role. It was difficult to lay down exactly what part the art subject had in the two schools, but one thing I could see clearly was that the students really loved the art lessons and the other subject teachers spoke well of the art subject.

The art teachers themselves had many opinions about their subject, which is very obvious. The art teachers think that their lessons are important for the students in many ways, especially when it comes to developing the students’ personal expressions and the students’ imagination and they also think that art language is equal to the written and spoken language. The art teachers stress that their subject is not only about how to paint in different ways and it seems that they really want me to know that and not misunderstand anything.

They think that the art subject needs more space and more hours a week, mainly because it is a practical subject that needs preparations before the lesson and after the lesson. The other subject teachers said that they also think that the art subject is important for the students. Most of the subject teachers pointed out that the art subject teaches students to dare express their feelings and that this helps the students to develop their personality in a way that other subject can’t do.

In the questions forms I asked the teachers to rank the importance of the subjects. I gave them six subjects that they could choose between: History, Sport, Mathematics, Art, Language and Music. Since they wrote the answers anonymously they didn’t have to take
me into consideration when they answered. I was surprised in a good way when I read the answers, because the art subject wasn’t ranked absolutely last. It was actually Mathematics that came last in this investigation, which I don’t think would have been the case if the investigation had been conducted in Sweden.

In the questionnaire forms the teachers ranked the importance of the subjects. They had to answer which subject they thought was the most important first, and the least important subject last. The answers showed that the art subject almost always came in the middle, in third or fourth place. The art teachers answered the same questions but of course the art subject came in first.

From my questionnaire answers and from my practical work in the two Thai schools I can now conclude that the art subject has a good role in the Thai schools.

5.1 Comparisons between my studies and observations

When I read the questionnaire replies I could see that it agreed with what I have seen in my practice. That made the replies more trustworthy and that’s always good.

The art lessons teach the students how to paint in different ways, but that was not the main thing with the lessons. I noticed that the art teachers made an effort to make the students attentive to the personal expressions and try to make them dare use personal expressions in their works of art.

I saw that most of the students really liked the art lesson, and respected the art teachers and the art subject. That respect shows that the art subject has a good role in the school, even if the lessons were only scheduled for one hour a week.

The school management also knew the importance of the art lesson, because they where at the time building a new bigger classroom for the art subject.

At the time that I visited the two schools, I never heard or saw anything bad regarding the art subject. But that could be because everybody knew that I was to become an art teacher in the future, and they didn’t want me to be discouraged. The students never expressed any bad thoughts about the art subject either.
6. Analysis and discussion

I will analyse and discuss my ideas and opinion about the art subject and its role in Thai schools and then I will give my exam paper some critique. I will also give some suggestions for future research.

Man’s opinion is formed early on in life, in early childhood. The opinions are influenced by society, personal experiences and their culture and environment. Everybody acts and feels individually depending on their personal background and reality. Culture mirrors Thai peoples’ lives and has a big importance for them that starts early in family traditions and continues in schools.

In the beginning of this essay I had a lot of personal prejudices that have now been shattered. But if I hadn’t had these prejudices, this essay would have never been written.

I thought that this essay would show in the results that Thailand was a country that didn’t accept development of the art subject. For example in personal expression through pictures, but I noticed while I wrote this essay that Thailand is almost like Sweden in this case, or is Thailand in fact a little bit further in the development concerning the art subject in schools?

Since I only visited two schools in Thailand, this essay can not form a basis for the situation in the whole of Thailand, concerning the art subject and its role in the Thai schools. But I have known about this shortcoming from the start of this essay. Another big flaw in the results has been the translations of the questionnaire answers that had to be translated from Thai into Swedish into English. The biggest part of the translation is correct, but not 100%.

I have a lot of practical facts that I can’t get down on this essay, because all these facts have nothing to do with this study. I got a lot of good experiences and feelings and experiences that I can’t explain in words.

This essay has given me answers to many questions I have had, but it has also given me some more thoughts and questions to build on.

I have had doubts about my teacher education since I started to study at Växjö University. My biggest doubt has been if the art teacher occupation is as respected as I would like it to be. I have seen and heard from a lot of people who have different opinions and thoughts about this subject. But after this essay I got a larger knowledge that the art
subject actually has a big influence in the student’s development and I now know that I am needed in the school world.

Even if the art lessons were almost the same as in Sweden, there were a lot of things that were opposite in the school world. I got a lot of good responses the whole time I was there, both from students and teachers. That is why I would like to work as an art teacher in Thailand in the future. I wouldn’t have had this feeling and these thoughts if I have hadn’t got the opportunity to study in Thailand.

6.1 Suggestions for future research

My suggestions for future research deal with a comparison between the Swedish art subject and the Thai art subject. I first wanted to do that study in this essay, but I realised that it was too big for me to work on, which is why I had to limit my work.
7. References

Internet

http://www.nis.ac.th/art.htm  May 23, 2007
http://www.sriwittayapaknam.ac.th/homepage.html  April 21, 2007

Literature

Ekström, Susanna "Bildglädje och läslust", 1997, Stockholm

Ericsson, Cilla, "Det målande barnet", 1991, Solna

Gardner, Howard, "Den bildade människan", 2000, Jönköping

Hansson, Nordström, Pedersen, Stafseng, "Barns bildspråk", 1991, Borås

Jernström, Elisabeth, "Kulturen som språngbräda", 1997, Lund

Karlsson, Sten-Gösta "Lusten att skapa", 2001, Stockholm


Lind, Hasselberg, Kühlhorn "Tidsbilder perspektiv på skolan och bildskapandet under 150 år", 1992, Arlöv

Lpo 94, Skolverket "Lärarens handbok", 2002, Stockholm

Sahlström, Berit, "Bildförståelse inom och mellan kulturer", 1997, Uppsala
8. Appendix

**Art teacher’s questionnaire:**

- Do you think that the art subject is equivalent other subjects in school?
- Do you think that the students think that the art subject is important? Or do the students think that the art-lesson is just something fun but not important?
- What does the school plan look like? Does the art subject have as much space as the other subjects?
- What does the government say about the art subject in school?
- Do you think that the art subject is just how to teach the student how to paint in different ways? Or do you think the art subject is a way to express feelings?
- Do you combine different subject with the art subject?
- Is the art-language the same as the language as in speak and write-language?
- Is the art subject important for the student in the future?
- Do you think that you can give “fair” grade? What exactly is it you look for when you giving the grade?
- Please rank in witch order you think are the most important subject. Wright the most important first and the least important subject at last.
  History, Sport, Mathematics, art, Language and Music

**The other teacher’s questionnaire:**

- What do you think that the students learn to do in the art subject?
- Do you think that the art subject is equally important as other education? If you answer yes, then why?
- Do you think that the art subject is just how to teach the student how to paint in different ways? Or do you think the art subject also is a way to express feelings?
- Do you think that the students can use the art subject for everyday use?
- Please rank in witch order you think are the most important subject. Wright the most important first and the least important subject at last.
  History, Sport, Mathematics, art, Language and Music